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THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN:

ITS MORAL AND SPIRITUAL LESSONS

BY THE

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PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE history of Joseph is one of the most beautiful and instructive stories that occur in the Bible, or that are to be found in any other book. The character of Joseph is the most perfect of any that we read of in the Old Testament,—and perhaps is only surpassed by that of our blessed Lord Himself, whose history that of Joseph resembles as well as represents. Moses was meek, David was generous, Solomon was wise, but each of them had some fault that dimmed the lustre of his virtues. Joseph had all these good qualities, but no one fault is charged against him. We must not, indeed, suppose that he was faultless: but we may conclude that he was freer from faults than most other men, when we find that not one is charged in the Bible

history against him. God, we may presume, has been pleased to record the history of this beautiful character in His Holy Book, for the purpose of showing to His children in all ages so lovely an example for their imitation. Joseph is especially worthy of imitation by the young; for they will learn from him how they ought to act at home and in the world, in adversity and prosperity, in humble and exalted stations. It is most important for the young to learn and practise home virtues, their duties to their parents, and to their brothers and sisters; for home duties and affections are the beginning and the foundation of all others. The young must love and obey their parents before they can love and obey the Lord, as their Father in heaven; and they must love and be kind to their brothers and sisters before they can love and do good to their neighbour. Nay, young people love God in loving their parents, for God has commanded them to honour their father and mother, which means to love and obey them; and they love their neighbour in loving their brothers and sisters, because the command to love their

neighbour as themselves includes love to their brothers and sisters. And what God requires us to do as a duty, and as a means to make others happy, He intends to be the means of making ourselves happy. Indeed, there is no way of being happy but by doing what will contribute to the happiness of others. The happiness of home depends upon every one of the family trying to make home happy, by acts of goodness and kindness to all who belong to it. This requires every one to be orderly, good tempered, serviceable, unselfish, sincere, forbearing, forgiving, and kind. Obedience to father and mother is the very first thing on which the welfare and happiness of a family depends, and that which is above all things necessary to make a happy home.

I am here assuming that parents are such as to render them worthy of the honour and duty of their children. Not that children before their proper age are to decide for themselves how far they are bound to render homage and obedience to their parents. But the kind and measure of honour which parents receive from their children must be in a great measure

determined by their own general character, and their conduct towards their children. This is a result that cannot be entirely prevented. One of the great blessings of pure religion is that it makes both parents and children, who are desirous to learn, worthy examples of parental and filial love. And my young readers have reason to thank their Divine Lord and Heavenly Father for blessing them with parents, who strive to do every thing that God requires to make them worthy of their children's love, and to make their children so good, that love for their parents will be a delight as well as a duty.

If we attend carefully to Joseph's history we may learn much that will be useful to us in this and all other respects. For I may remark, further, that all persons, young and old, high and low, rich and poor, may gain wisdom by studying Joseph's history and character. The child and the man, the son and the servant, the captive in the dungeon and the king on the throne, may all study Joseph's history with advantage. Kings may learn of him how to rule; for it was when Joseph was next to

Pharaoh on the throne, and was ruler over all the land of Egypt, that he showed how wise and good a governor he was. By his prudence and care he provided the means of saving the people of Egypt, and those of many other countries, from great suffering, and even from starvation, during a famine which lasted without intermission for the long period of seven years. It was then, also, when in the height of his glory, that he behaved with so much tenderness and manifested such forgiving love to his brethren, from whom he had received nothing but hatred and injury.

Jacob had, as you know, twelve sons. Joseph and Benjamin were the two youngest. They were the sons of the same mother. For Jacob, you are aware, had two wives, one named Leah and the other Rachel. Rachel was the younger and more beautiful daughter of Laban, whom Jacob loved first and loved most. He desired to have Rachel, and Rachel only; but it was the custom in those days, and in the country where Laban lived, that the elder daughter must be married before the younger. Jacob.

therefore, had to take Leah for a wife before he could obtain Rachel. For very many years after their marriage Rachel had no children. The Lord, we are told, withheld children from her, but gave sons to Leah. After ten sons and one daughter had been born to Jacob by Leah and the handmaids, then we read—"God remembered Rachel, and she conceived and bare a son, and she called his name Joseph." (Gen. xxx. 22.) Some time after the birth of Joseph Rachel had another son, whom his father named Benjamin. (Gen. xxxv. 16-18).

We hear nothing more of Joseph after the record of his birth, till we come to the thirty-seventh chapter, where his history begins. We there read, at the third verse, that "Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age." It may seem to you that if this were the only reason for Jacob's greater love for his younger son, Benjamin should have been his best beloved, because he was born several years later than Joseph, when Jacob was still older. But Joseph was Rachel's firstborn, and both Rachel and Jacob had long desired to have children,

and this answer to their prayers must have produced in them deep gratitude to the Lord and great joy of heart. Jacob, we may suppose, had long given up all hope of having a child by his best-beloved, Rachel; and when at last a son was born to him in his old age, he regarded the blessing with strong affection as a special gift from God. While Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other children, he loved the others also; for although a father may for some special reason love one of his children more than the rest, he does not, if he be a good man, withhold his love from the others, or neglect his duty towards them. Yet we are to remember that the circumstances are very different now from what they were then. Christian men have only one wife, and therefore there is not the same ground for partiality as there was then—that is, for loving the child of one wife more than the child of another.

Jacob's love for Joseph prompted him to make a distinction in his dress; he made him a coat of many colours. It is considered that this more properly means a coat of several

pieces. Yet it is to be assumed that these pieces were of different colours; for it would be difficult to suppose why a coat or garment such as was then worn should be made of many different pieces, unless it was for the purpose of introducing into it a variety of beautiful or attractive colours. But whatever was the precise character of the garment, we know from other parts of the Bible that such garments were worn as a mark of distinction. From the Second Book of Samuel we learn that such garments were worn by the young or virgin daughters of kings. It is said (chap. xiii. 18) that David's daughter, Tamar, "had a garment of divers colours upon her; for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled." This kind of garment was therefore a mark of dignity, and it would seem a badge of youth, and perhaps of purity. These are the only two instances in the Bible of such garments being mentioned, and they both seem to bespeak a father's fondness, and a child's youth and innocence. The coat of many colours, therefore which Israel made for his son Joseph. he no doubt intended to be a token of his love for the son of his old age, and as a sign of the son's superior excellence, his great simplicity and integrity of character.

But if his father loved Joseph best, Joseph seems best to have deserved his father's love. The very first thing mentioned of Joseph, after he had become a young man, shows that he was better than his brethren, or than several of them at least. In Gen. xxxvii. 2, we read that Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, "and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." Joseph's brethren were, no doubt, guilty of serious misconduct; and this must have been frequent, if not habitual. Judging from Joseph's character, as it is afterwards displayed, there must have been something very wrong in his brothers' conduct before he reported it to his father; and we may suppose he had spoken to them of their evil deeds before declaring them to Jacob.

It may seem to some young people that

Joseph was guilty of tale-telling, and that it would have been more gentle and generous of him to conceal his brothers' faults. But we must look at Joseph's motive. If he had told his brothers' faults from any ill-feeling towards them, or even for the mere love of reporting their misconduct, and bringing them into trouble, there might be cause for blaming him for what he did. Joseph's character forbids us to think that this was the case. He loved his brethren and desired their good; and he must have reported their conduct to his father. to make him aware of their evils, that he might use means for correcting and improving them. A brother may, therefore, show his love for his brethren by reporting their misconduct to his father, knowing that his father loves them, and only desires to know the misconduct of his children, that he may restrain them in their evil courses, and guide them in the path of virtue. Only, young people, in doing what Joseph did, must do it with a good end in view. Those who, like Joseph's brethren, go on in evil, besides doing serious injury to themselves, do serious injury to

their parents; and for their parents, as well as for their brethren's sake, grave faults should not be concealed. Any one influenced by Joseph's motives may, therefore, imitate Joseph's example.

CHAPTER II.

HILE this beautiful history shows Joseph to have been actuated by the kindest feeling towards his brothers, it shows great unkindness of feeling, great malignity of disposition, on the part of his brethren towards Their ill-feeling towards him shows ithim. self from the beginning of the sacred story. At Genesis xxxvii. 4, we read that "when his brethren saw that their father loved Joseph more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." They hated him, not because of any fault of his, but because he was loved by his father. They had come to that age when they were able to judge in such a matter. If there was any one to blame it was not Joseph, but his father. Why then should they hate the one who was blameless? It was, as is too evident. because they themselves were evil and envious.

Joseph was, as we should say, his father's favourite, and his brothers could not bear to think that he should be regarded by him with any preference, however innocent or just that preference might be. The apostle advises Christians to prefer one another in love. Joseph's brethren did not feel disposed to do Elder brothers should not be envious of the greater love which their parents bestow upon their younger brothers. They most require their parents' tender care, and there is no just reason for displeasure that they receive How natural is the description here of an unbrotherly spirit and conduct! "They hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." How like is this description of a family, who lived four thousand years ago, to many families that we live amongst at this present day! is the description of fallen and corrupt human nature in all ages, when people give way to their evil natural dispositions. How often do we find that brothers and sisters, whom God intended to love and speak lovingly to one another, yet cannot speak peaceably to each other. And how sad it is when some one of a family, who is more good or pious than the others, is yet hated and ill-treated by his less godly brethren! Hatred of a brother, even if he be evil, is wrong, but envy of any favour that is bestowed upon a good and deserving brother or sister, is still more so, and is the sign of a depraved heart. The young should be warned by the unjust and evil conduct of Joseph's brethren, especially when they see to what dreadful lengths hatred and envy will go when they are not checked but encouraged. But the hatred of Joseph's brethren not only continued but increased, and in what now follows we read of the cause of this.

"Joseph" we are told (at the fifth verse), "dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren, and they hated him yet the more." The dreams which had come to Joseph reveal the cause of the increased hatred with which his brethren regarded him on account of them. He relates his dream to them. "Behold," he said, "we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf." His brethren

understood the meaning of the dream, for they said-"Shalt thou, indeed, reign over us? or shalt thou, indeed, have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words." His telling his dream to his brothers shows the unsuspecting innocence and sincerity of Joseph's heart, and even his affection for them; whether he saw its meaning as quickly and clearly as they did we are not told; but had he been as willing to rule as they were unwilling to be ruled, he would probably have kept his dream a secret, lest its being known might prevent its fulfil-We know how literally this dream, as interpréted by his brethren, was fulfilled, and as we shall have to note, when we come to see these now haughty and envious brethren bowing in profound humiliation before him.

We may now remark that this and the other dreams of Joseph, being prophetic, foreshadowing events that took place many years afterwards, must have been inspired by the Lord, who alone knows, because He alone disposes, all future events. We find many instances besides these of God revealing His will and

wisdom to His people in sleep. And this interesting circumstance teaches us that God is near to us, and takes care of us while we are unable to take care of ourselves, and that when He sees good He can give us warning and instruction in dreams. There is one great difference between us and Joseph. In those times they had not the Scriptures, such as we have, to guide them, and, therefore, the Lord gave them special instruction by means of angels and in dreams. We have now the will and wisdom of God revealed in His Word. And having thus the precious Book of God in our hands, we have, so to speak, a constantly "open vision," and a "more sure word of prophecy" than that given in dreams, "to which we do well to take heed."

But Joseph dreamed another dream; and this time the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to him. This dream he told to his father as well as to his brethren. His father saw the meaning it involved; for he said to his son, "What is this that thou hast dreamed; shall I and thy mother and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves

to thee to the earth?" These two dreams thus foreshadowed two distinct events. The first had reference to his brethren only, and was fulfilled when they went down to Egypt to buy corn, when they made obeisance to Joseph, as their sheaves had done to his in his dream. The second referred to the whole family, and was fulfilled when Jacob and all his household removed from Canaan, and went down and dwelt in Egypt under the rule and dominion of Joseph, as they had rightly understood his dreams to foretell.

Not long after the time when Joseph had his dreams, his brethren had an opportunity of manifesting their hatred against him in a way that seemed likely, as it was intended, to prevent their fulfilment, but which an overruling Providence made the very means of their accomplishment.

CHAPTER III.

OSEPH'S brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem, and Jacob sent Joseph to see if it was well with his brethren, and well with the flock, and to bring him word. When Joseph came to Shechem, he learned from a man, of whom he inquired, that they had gone to Dothan. "And Joseph went after his brethren and found them in Dothan." He was now some miles away from the house where his father lived. "When his brethren saw him afar off, and before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slav him." How cruel must have been their hatred! Their brother, and but a lad, came a distance from home to see them and inquire after their welfare. One might suppose that if they could not love him, they could not have it in their hearts to injure him: yet no sooner does he appear in the distance on his

weary way, than they are inspired with the wicked purpose of taking away his life. What a warning is this against being "angry with a brother without a fault!" How guarded should we be against allowing any thing of hatred or envy to have a place in our thoughts. much less to take possession of our hearts, against a brother, or indeed against any human being! One of the strongest reasons against killing their gentle brother was the grief his loss would bring upon their aged father. They thought, indeed, of him, but it was only to think how they might deceive him, by accounting for the death of his beloved son, so as to conceal their own wickedness. The father was to be told that some evil beast had devoured him!

While this plan was agreed upon, one of the brothers appears to have been absent. This was Reuben, the eldest brother, who seems to have had some feelings of tenderness towards Joseph and his father. When Reuben heard what was the intention of his brethren, he said unto them—" Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and

lay no hand upon him;" and Reuben's object was "that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again." The brethren consented to this proposal, seemingly without having altogether given up the idea of afterwards carrying out their first bloody pur-All this was discussed and settled while Joseph was approaching them. When the unsuspecting youth came to his brethren, instead of meeting with a kind reception, he was seized, and they stript him of his coat of many colours, and cast him into a pit. The heartlessness of his cruel brethren is strongly indicated, for it is related that as soon as they had committed this wicked act they sat down to eat bread. While engaged, with unconcern, perhaps with joy, at their unblest meal, "they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt." It was now that a new and more humane mode of disposing of Joseph was suggested to the brethren by Judah. said—" What profit is it if we slay our brother

and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hands be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver." Reuben was again absent when Joseph was thus sold as a slave. When he returned he found the pit empty, and rent his clothes, which was a sign of mourning, and showed signs of great distress.

The scene which ensued is deeply affecting. "They took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they brought it to their father and said, This we have found; know now whether it be thy son's coat or no? And he knew it, and said, This is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." Thus cruelly deceived by his own children, and led by them to believe that Joseph had been devoured by some wild beast, Jacob rent his clothes and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days,

and said that he would go down to the grave unto his son mourning.

It is remarkable that those very sons who had caused him all this sorrow rose up with his other children to comfort him. And it is no less remarkable that Reuben, as well as the other brethren, kept the truth concealed from their father, and never revealed it to him till after Joseph had made himself known to them in Egypt, when on their return home they announced to their father the extraordinary tidings—" Joseph is yet alive, and is governor over all the land of Egypt."

The Ishmaelites who had bought Joseph carried him down to Egypt, and there sold him to Potiphar, an officer, a captain of the guard. Away from his father's house and from all his kindred—away from that home which he loved, he is now not only a stranger but a captive in a strange land. But although he was away from all that he loved and that loved him, there was *One* who had not forsaken him nor left him. "The Lord was with Joseph." How blessed and comforting is this truth! His cruel brethren could separate him

om his earthly father, but they could not parate him from his Heavenly Father. None n separate us from Him, or remove us from is presence. No one can do this but ourlves. So long as we are faithful to Him, e will be faithful to us; and the further we e from our kindred the nearer we may be God. Trial serves but to bring the good to nearer connection with Him. How finely es the Apostle Paul deal with this subject! "who can separate us from the love of irist? Shall tribulation, or distress, or percution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or ord? I am persuaded that neither death, r life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor wers, nor any other creature shall be able separate us from the love of God which is Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 35-39.)

CHAPTER IV.

JOSEPH felt the benefit of having the Lord's help. In consequence of the Lord being with him, Joseph was a prosperous man. "His master saw that the Lord was with him." How did he see this? He did not see the Lord, but he saw in Joseph's piety and virtue the evidence that he was a godly young man, and thus that God was with him. Joseph therefore found grace or favour in his master's sight, and he made him ruler over his house. Potiphar did not lose his reward, for "the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field."

Joseph was beautiful as well as good; he was a goodly person and well favoured. Beauty, which is a source of vanity and proves a snare to some, had no such effect

upon Joseph; but it was the occasion of a great trial and a sad reverse of fortune to him. This is one of the first of the many instances which the present history affords of the great purity of Joseph's mind and excellence of his character. After relating how much Joseph was trusted by Potiphar, the sacred writer tells us, "it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and she said, Lie with me." Deeply sinful as this was on the part of his mistress and it was a temptation that required strong religious principles in a young man, in Joseph's position, to resist-Joseph did resist it; and not only did he refuse compliance with the solicitations of his mistress, but he expressed the greatest abhorrence at her sinful proposal. His words on that occasion deserve to be printed in letters of gold; but, what is far more important, should be imprinted on every heart, especially on the heart of every young "He refused, and said unto his master's wife, HOW CAN I DO THIS GREAT WICKED-NESS AND SIN AGAINST GOD?" This was not all he said to his shameless enticer; he

pointed out how very criminal it would be in him, trusted as he was, to be guilty of such "Behold," he says, "my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath into my hands; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Here was faithfulness at once to his master and to his God. This is the perfection of religion. It is the union of love to God and love to the neighbour. Upon these two hang all the law and the prophets. The law and the prophets, as we possess them. had not yet been revealed when Joseph made this memorable answer to one who tried to allure him to sin, nor had that Gospel been given which so greatly exalts Moses' law. But God had revealed the law in Joseph's mind, and impressed it upon his heart. And this must still be done with every one before there can be true religious virtue. We have now the outward law and the Gospel; but the Spirit of the Lord must dwell in our

hearts, and, through the outward revelation, control our passions and order our lives in righteousness. We have, indeed, many and great advantages over those who lived in Joseph's times. Not only have we the Gospel, but we have the example, of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and we have Him present with us always, to strengthen and lead us to do as He Himself did. If. then, Joseph was willing and able to resist a strong temptation to commit a great sin, how much more should we resist who have the sword of the Spirit of Jesus, and the shield of His faith! Such a lesson as this, by one who lived four thousand years ago, is much needed in our own times; and Christian and enlightened as these times are, we may well look back to the young Hebrew captive for one of the highest examples of religious moralityfor the union, in this one instance, of piety, chastity, and conscientiousness.

But Joseph's temptation was not yet ended. His purity and constancy to principle had a further and severer trial. His mistress spoke to him, not once only, but day by day in the same manner; but Joseph hearkened not unto her. But still more severely than even this was his constancy tried. From entreaty and persuasion his master's wife proceeded to force. "While Joseph was one day engaged in his business, when there was no one in the house, she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me; and he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got him out." How strong must have been his religious principles, to resist the pleasures of sin thus thrust upon him!

Turning now to the temptress, we have exemplified, in the conduct of the wife of Potiphar, the truth that impure love is inwardly hatred. No sooner did she find that the virtue of Joseph was proof against all her wiles and violence, than her love was turned into hate. The truth is, the love of the evil is self-love. They love others for the sake of themselves, to derive some selfish gratification from their connection with them; and when their hope is disappointed, they can hate the same person that they seemed to love, and seek revenge as a mere gratification. "She laid up his garment by her, until her lord came home. And

she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto me came in unto me to mock me; and it came to pass that as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out." It was natural for Potiphar to believe his wife, notwithstanding it was against so good and wise a servant as he had found in Joseph. "Joseph's master therefore took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison."

And is this the reward and end of Joseph's high integrity and spotless virtue? No, it is not the end; it is only a means to the end. We have here, indeed, a striking instance of the seeming reverse of justice that is not unfrequently found to prevail in this world; the innocent suffer and the guilty escape, and even triumph. To the righteous themselves it sometimes seems as if their virtue were an obstacle to their prosperity; as if reward were for the unprincipled and success for the plotter. So would it often be if this world were our final home. All are not destined to obtain in this

life the name and place which their worth may deserve. But He who knows what is best for our eternal good, permits us as His children to suffer even for conscience' sake. In those times in which Joseph lived, the Divine Providence was often manifested as if it had its final issues in this life, because there was no clear knowledge of another life, and because prosperity in this world was the type or ensample of eternal happiness in the next. The present course and sufferings of Joseph were the means by which Providence was to work out a higher place and name than he had enjoyed in the house of Potiphar, captain of the guard.

Again abandoned and cast into the lowest depths of misery, even for his virtues' sake, Joseph is not left without succour. He, without whom a sparrow falls not to the ground, allows not this faithful one to fall without a purpose, nor to suffer without His care. "The Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison." The Lord did not appear visibly to Joseph, but He gave him miraculous

He made Joseph himself a medium of producing what was for his advantage, disposing the keeper of the prison, so far as he was inclined to yield to His divine influence. and to be acted upon by Joseph's conduct, to further His divine purpose. Some suppose that these favourable results were due to Joseph's own prudent and good conduct to his own beautiful character. So, in one sense, they were. But, in the first place, Joseph's virtues were of God; and, in the second place, God's grace acted through these virtues to make him find favour with the keeper of the prison. Here, too, his keeper saw, as Potiphar had seen, that the Lord was with him. His piety and virtue assured these Egyptian men that he walked with God, and that Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, was with him. And the keeper of the prison had such confidence in him, that he looked not to any thing that was under his hand,

CHAPTER V.

I was while in prison, and in consequence of being there, that Joseph had the opportunity of manifesting the wisdom God gave to him, which led to his being brought into the presence of Pharaoh, and thus to his being elevated to the high place he occupied in Egypt, and through this again to be so great a blessing to his father's house and to the people of other countries.

Pharaoh had been wroth with two of his officers, the chief of the butlers and the chief of the bakers, and he put them into the prison where Joseph was. Each of these two officers dreamed a dream in one night. When Joseph came unto them in the morning they were sad. And this brings out incidentally the kindness and amiability of Joseph's character. He inquired—"Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?" Their dreams had saddened them. They re-

lated to him their dreams, and Joseph told them the interpretation of them. The interpretation promised life and honour to one, and dishonour and death to the other. And so it came to pass. After three days Pharaoh restored the butler to his office, and hanged the baker on a tree.

When Joseph gave the butler assurance of restoration to his office, he made this request to him: "Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

One would think that so simple and pathetic an appeal, from one who had brought so much hope and comfort to his mind, would have been readily and gratefully responded to by his fellow-prisoner, when he regained his liberty. But alas! "the chief butler remembered not Joseph, but forgot him." True to human experience is this incident. Benefits received in adversity are too often forgotten in pros-

perity. Fortune, as the world would express it, seems to have turned her back upon Joseph. His very virtues seem to be the cause of his misfortunes; his benefits bring him no relief, Injury and forgetfulness consign him to the dreary dungeon. Yet the Lord was with him. But the Lord's time of deliverance had not vet come. He who sees the end from the beginning knows how much affliction His children need. It would frustrate the divine purpose to communicate this knowledge to them. The trial of their virtue requires that they should wait patiently in trust and hope. There is no sign of Joseph murmuring against God, though he justly complained against the injustice and ingratitude of men.

The time of Joseph's deliverance came at last. Two full years had passed since the butler had been restored to his office and had given the cup into Pharaoh's hand,—but Joseph was still in the dungeon. Had the butler remembered Joseph and mentioned him to Pharaoh, he might have been set at liberty, and left to make what use of it he could; but now God was to do for him more than he could

have done for himself,—he was about to open for him a passage from the prison to the Pharaoh himself now had his dreams. In those days, when dreams were regarded as warnings and instructions given from God in enigmatical shape, men attached great importance to them. Still greater importance must have been attached to the dreams of a king, not only because of his greatness, but because these visions might be supposed to have some reference to public affairs, to be portents of national calamities or blessings. Such was the character of Pharaoh's dreams. When the king awoke in the morning, after having had two very singular dreams, "he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof, and Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh." It was now that the butler remembered Joseph. Beginning with the very proper acknowledgment, "I do remember my faults this day," he relates to Pharaoh how the Hebrew prisoner had interpreted his and the chief baker's dreams, and how exactly they had been fulfilled. Then "Pharaoh sent and

called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh." Here is an event told more like a dream than a sober reality. Joseph, but a few minutes since immured in a dungeon, seemingly in filth and rags, is hastily cleaned and attired, and placed in the presence of Pharaoh, the richest and most powerful monarch of the East. But how noble yet simple is the deportment of Joseph in this mighty presence, but still more, how self-denying and true to his God, in his confidence of being able to give the true meaning of Pharaoh's dreams! When the king addressed him in complimentary terms, saying—"I have heard say of thee that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it, Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Great must have been the inducement in his position, if not to claim, at least not to disclaim, the power which was thus freely ascribed to him. We are all too prone to claim God's talents bestowed upon us as our own. We may learn a great lesson from Joseph's

noble and pious testimony; always to give God the glory due unto His name for every good or gift that we possess.

Pharaoh's dreams and Joseph's interpretation of them are well known, and are singularly expressive. Pharaoh dreamt that while he stood on the banks of the Nile there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well favoured, and they fed in a meadow; and there came up after them seven kine, poor and very ill-favoured and lean; and the seven lean kine did eat up the seven fat kine. And when the seven lean had eaten up the fat kine, it could not be known that they had eaten them; for they were still as lean and ill-favoured as at the beginning. In his second dream Pharaoh saw seven ears of corn upon one stalk, full and good, and after them seven ears withered and thin; and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears. These dreams were certainly extraordinary, and might baffle human ingenuity to read them. Whatever conjectural explanation might have been given them, none but God, as Joseph had said, could give the true interpretation; for none but He can know future events. Joseph told Pharaoh that God had shewed the king what He was about to do. The seven good kine and the seven good ears were seven years of great plenty, and the seven lean kine and seven thin ears were seven years of famine, that God was about to cause in all the land of Egypt; and the famine was to be so grievous that the previous plenty would not be known. Such was the interpretation given by Joseph. And here, indeed, God was with him, for human wisdom could not have revealed it.

But Joseph not only explained the dream, and thus gave from God premonition that was of the greatest value, not for the benefit of Egypt only, but of all surrounding countries, but he advised Pharaoh to turn the dream to good account, by saving during the seven plenteous years, to meet the necessities of the seven years of scarcity. He counselled him to look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt, and appoint officers under him, to gather the fifth part of the food of the plenteous years, and

lay up corn and keep food in the cities against the seven years of famine.

This wise counsel Pharaoh was wise enough to take, and he shewed no less wisdom in appointing Joseph to fill the office which he had proposed. "Can we," said the king to his court, "find such a one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" In adopting Joseph, he said, "Inasmuch as God has shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art; thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have made thee ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck." Pharaoh also gave him to wife Asenath, daughter of the priest of On. Joseph was now indeed recompensed for his long affliction. Honour and wealth and happiness were now his; and he gave expression to his thankfulness, as the people in those times were wont to do, in the names he gave to his two sons. One he called Manasseh, which signifies forgetting, "for God," said he, "hath made me forget all my toil and my father's house;" and the other he named Ephraim, which signifies fruitful, "for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

But Joseph's life was now not only a prosperous but a useful one. During the seven plenteous years he gathered up corn even as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left off numbering. "But when the seven years of plenteousness were ended, the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said."

And this brings us to the most interesting part of Joseph's history, and one in which we see the hand of God, as the principal end which His providence had in view, in bringing Joseph through so many seemingly unfortunate circumstances to his present elevation in Egypt.

CHAPTER VI.

THE famine which Joseph had predicted. and against which he had so anxiously provided, was not confined to Egypt; it was "over all the face of the earth." And not only was there provision in Egypt for the Egyptians themselves, but "all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn, because that the famine was sore in all lands." The famine extended, of course, to the land of Canaan, where Joseph's father and his family dwelt. They felt its pressure, but Jacob had ascertained where relief was to be obtained. "When Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt, get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live, and not die."

Ten of Jacob's sons set out for Egypt, the

father having retained Benjamin at home. And now it was that they who hated Joseph for his dreams, and had done a cruel deed in order to belie them, began themselves to give them a literal fulfilment. When they came into his presence as the ruler of the land, in order to obtain corn, "they bowed down themselves with their faces to the earth." They knew not, indeed, that they were making "obeisance" to him whom they had sold to the Ishmaelites. But although they knew not Joseph, Joseph knew them. Joseph had now an object in view which induced him to withhold from them all knowledge of himself, and act towards them with affected suspicion and enmity. Having been told by them in answer to inquiries, who and whose sons they were, he accused them of being spies, and having no other object in coming into Egypt than to see the nakedness of the land. They had told him that Benjamin their youngest brother had been left with their father Joseph's immediate object was to have Benjamin brought down. And his great desire to see Benjamin arose from himself and Beniamin being the sons of one mother, Rachel. In these times the children of the same mother loved each other more than the children of different mothers; and the circumstance of the ten brethren being the children of other mothers, though of the same father, was in a great measure the cause of their hating and persecuting Joseph. Having accused his brethren of being spies, and affecting to doubt the truth of their assurance that they were true men, Joseph proposed that they should prove the truth of their assertion by sending one of their number to bring down Benjamin; but he afterwards agreed with them to leave one of their number bound in the house of the prison, where Joseph himself had been so long confined, while the others returned with provisions, to bring Benjamin with them when they came again.

This unexpected stroke of adversity greatly disturbed the sons of Jacob, and, as is often the case in seasons of affliction, their conscience was awakened, and they began to trace their present distress to their former misconduct. No doubt they had often thought

with themselves, and talked to each other, of their cruel treatment of their blameless brother. and no doubt a sense of guilt and dread of future retribution often troubled their guilty minds. How natural was it that their present misfortune should bring their crime forcibly to their recollection, and awaken a sense of their guilt! So keen were the stings of conscience, that they began to accuse themselves while they were yet in Joseph's presence. They spoke what they supposed to be a language unknown to Joseph. "They said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother; in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Reuben increased this cause of selfaccusation by reminding them that he had spoken unto them, saying—"Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear; therefore, behold, also his blood is required."

In the account of their treatment of Joseph nothing is said about his anguish and his entreaties. But here we find an additional reason of their confession to one another of their guiltiness. His beseeching cry of anguish must have often sounded in their ears; and now, to use the expressive language of Scripture, the voice of their brother's blood seemed to pierce their very souls. What a picture does this present to us of the working of a guilty conscience! and what a warning does it read to us to shun all evil, and to preserve the conscience clear and void of offence!

And how beautiful a spectacle does the scene present to us, on the other hand, in the effect of the self-accusings of his brethren upon Joseph! Although their cruel treatment must also, by their recital, have been brought vividly before his mind, it excited in him no feelings of resentment or desire for revenge; on the contrary, tender affection and pity were the feelings of his kind and noble heart, and so deeply was he moved, that "he turned himself about from them and wept." Yet his purpose of benevolence required that he should carry his agreement with them into effect. He therefore returned to them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eves.

Joseph had commanded his servants to fill their sacks with corn, and put every man's money into his sack. Laden with corn, and with provender for the way, the brethren took their departure, and proceeded on their journey homeward. When they halted at an inn on the way, one of them found, on opening his sack to give his ass provender, that his money was in his sack's mouth; and this was another source of distress to them, for even this, which might otherwise have seemed an instance of good fortune, appealed again to their guilty fears, and caused them to exclaim -"What is this that God hath done unto us?" They, however, resumed their journey. and came to their father in Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them.

And here was a new and double distress to their aged father. They had returned without Simeon, and they proposed to take Benjamin. Jacob could not help accusing them of multiplying his sorrows. "Me ye have bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin away? All these things are against me." Jacob therefore

declared that Benjamin should not go down to Egypt, "for should mischief befall him, it would bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." Still Benjamin was taken down to Egypt, as we shall soon see.

CHAPTER VII.

THE famine continuing, and the supply of corn being exhausted, Jacob desired his sons to go again and buy them a little food. And soon the question of Benjamin going with them was revived. Judah, the eldest son, told his father that the man did solemnly protest unto them, that they should not see his face unless their brother was with them. Jacob at last consented, and having received their father's blessing, they departed and came into Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

The most interesting chapter in the history of Joseph now commences, and nothing is more beautiful, nothing more affecting, nothing more improving, than the cause and issue of this incomparable narrative, which is as simply natural as it is emblematically instructive. "When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he

said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon." When the man brought them into Joseph's house, they saw in this again a cause of alarm; they thought it was on account of the money they had found in their sacks, and they were under apprehension that the ruler might seek occasion against them, and fall upon them and take them for bondmen. They therefore told the steward of Joseph's house how they had found the money in their sacks; but he allayed their apprehensions, saying—"Peace be unto you, fear not; your God, and the God of your fathers, hath given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money."

Preparations were now made for their eating bread at the table of Pharaoh. When Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hands, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. Joseph asked them of their welfare, and said—"Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? When they had answered him, they again bowed their heads and made obeisance.

And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother, and he sought where to weep: and he entered into his chamber and wept there."

When Joseph, after giving vent to his feelings, returned, having washed the effects of weeping from his face and refrained himself, he desired his servants to set on bread, a term which includes all kinds of food, and his brethren sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth, and the men marvelled at one Some have supposed that the cause of their marvelling was that they had been placed in this order, wondering how they had been desired to sit in the exact order of their birth. However this may be, "Joseph sent messes unto them, giving Benjamin five times as much as any of the others, and they drank and were merry with him."

The morning after the feast they took their departure. Joseph had again given orders to put every man's money in his sack's mouth. But this time he commanded the steward to put his silver cup also into the sack's mouth of the youngest. Soon after their departure the steward was sent after them, to demand of them why they had rewarded evil for good, in taking the silver cup in which his lord drank, and indeed divined. They protested their innocence, but on searching their sacks, the cup was found in the sack of the youngest. Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. Judah and his brethren were come into Joseph's house, they fell before him to the ground. When Joseph accused them of having done an evil deed, Judah addressed him, detailing the circumstances under which they appeared before him, entreating in conclusion to be allowed to take Benjamin's place as a bondman unto my lord, that the child might return to his father.

It may seem that these trials were not really necessary, since Joseph might have obtained

his object without them. But Joseph was a wise man, and as he knew the use of affliction, he might see the benefit his brethren would derive from undergoing trials. And no doubt they were benefited by them, and prepared the better to appreciate and to profit by the reconciliation which Joseph had in view.

When Judah had ended his address, Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him, and he cried-"Cause every man to go out from me." When they stood alone before him, Joseph made himself known to his brethren, and he wept aloud. And he said unto his brethren—"I am Joseph." What must have been the feelings of his brethren on hearing this extraordinary announcement! The effect upon them is well expressed in the sacred text-" His brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled (or rather terrified) at his presence." Amazement, shame, and terror were no doubt mingled in the general emotion which his words produced, and so powerfully were they moved that they were speechless. What a relief to their troubled consciences was this discovery calculated to

afford! What joy was it calculated to bring to them to find him whom they had supposed for ever lost, to find him alive whom they might fear was dead, to find him crowned with honour whom they had sold as a slave! But no doubt their first impression was that of astonishment and dismay at finding themselves in the presence and in the power of one whom they had so cruelly hated and so deeply injured. Joseph perceived their feelings, and to assure them, he said to them, and undoubtedly in tones of love and tenderness-" Come near to me, I pray you." And when they approached nearer, he again said to them, as if his first revelation of the fact had rather stupified than informed them-"I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ve sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life." What a beautiful manifestation of forgiveness is here, what an instance of pious recognition of the hand of Divine Providence in the most adverse events of life! Joseph did not mean to teach that they were not to blame for what they had done to him,

or that God had inspired them with that hatred of him which led them to sell him into He meant that God had overruled their evil for good, and bent their purpose into an act which turned to the accomplishment of a great general benefit. And he desired to lead his brethren to recognize the hand of God in the events in which they had a share, and to change their childish fear of God for a fear which has hope and love within it. This was a change they needed. It is evident they had never taken a right view of the deed they had done. They had felt compunction, but they had never felt repentance. Repentance is always accompanied with a desire or an effort to make, as far as possible, amends for injury done to another, and leads therefore to a confession of faults before man, as well as of sin before God. If Joseph's brethren had been really repentant, they would have confessed to their father how great an injury they had done. and would have relieved his mind from the belief that his son had been devoured by a wild beast, by telling him that they sold him to the Ishmaelites. But this they never did.

not even after they had accused themselves while in the presence of Joseph.

But Joseph tells his brethren that God had sent him to preserve them a posterity in the earth, and to save them by a great deliverance. He saw that it was the Divine purpose that Jacob and his family should come into Egypt, as this had indeed been declared unto Abraham, that they might be multiplied, and preserved, and prepared for a final settlement in the land of Canaan. Joseph desired his brethren to haste and go up to his father, and carry the joyful tidings that God had made him ruler over all the land of Egypt, and to tell him to come and dwell with him in the land of Goshen.

When Joseph had delivered this message to his brethren, "he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he blessed all his brethren, and wept upon them; and after that his brethren talked with him." The distinguishing feature of this part of the narrative is the tenderness of Joseph's love for his brethren, and for Benjamin especially. This

is not seen so much in the affection he shews for his elder brethren, as in the seeming forgetfulness and perfect forgiveness of all the hatred and injuries he had experienced at their hands. Revenge is one of the strongest and most unquenchable of human passions, and the law of retaliation is one of the most deeply inscribed on our fallen human nature. On no duty did our blessed Lord lay greater stress, none did he inculcate with more emphasis, than that of forgiveness, and no grace did He more exalt than that of mercy. "Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you," was one of His declarations. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses," was a warning. No character in the Old Testament exhibits this heavenly feeling so perfectly as Joseph. His history seems as if designed by the Lord to show forth great forgiveness of great injuries. Job exhibits extraordinary patience under severe affliction: but his sufferings came apparently from the hand of God, though really through the agency of Satan or evil spirits; while Joseph's came through the hands of men, and especially those

of his own brothers, who were bound to love and cherish him. When, therefore, we see him returning good for evil, love for hatred, blessing for cursing, we cannot but regard Joseph as a noble example of what religion can do to cast out the evil feelings of the corrupt human heart, and soften it down into a state of tender and forgiving love. "He kissed all his brethren and wept upon them." No doubt this tenderness flowed out the more, that he had so long been separated from them and from his home. Joseph's flood of tenderness to his brethren disarmed all their suspicions and banished all their fears; and now for the first time since the disclosure of the secret "they talked with him." Their minds were relieved from a load of conflicting and contending passions, and they communed with him as men relieved of a burden on their conscience, and reconciled to one whom they had greatly outraged.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE history of Joseph under this view we need not pursue much further. Our object has been to trace it chiefly with a view to exhibit before the young reader the purity and beauty of his character. The fame of the circumstance of Joseph's brethren having come, was heard in Pharaoh's house, and the king joined with his favourite deputy or viceroy, to urge Jacob and all his house to come down and make his abode in Egypt. The brethren were accordingly sent away with waggons to carry down the whole household. Joseph, in dismissing them, gave them this brotherly and useful advice-"See that ye fall not out by the way." This was a lesson which they may have needed, as they were likely to accuse one another for the more active share some of them had taken in the conspiracy against their younger brother. And it is a lesson which we all may learn, and

have need to practice while journeying in the path of life with our brethren in this world.

The scene described between the brethren and their aged father is most touching. When his sons told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt, " Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." And well might he regard it as an idle But when he became convinced, and "saw the waggons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived; and Israel said, It is enough; I will go and see him before I die." And when they arrived in Goshen, "Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet his father, and presented himself unto him and fell on his neck. and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive."

How happy must the aged Jacob have been to see his son alive whom he had for so many years mourned as dead! His willingness and even his desire to die was one of the results and signs of that happiness. It is sometimes supposed that it is only a sense of misery that

makes people desire death, and that the happier they are, the more unwilling or the more afraid they are to die. Perhaps merely worldly happiness always makes death terrible; but the more truly, that is, the more spiritually happy people are in this world, the more willing are they to depart into that world where happiness has its true abode. It is recorded by Benjamin Franklin, that when, during a thunderstorm, he conducted some of the lightning into a phial, and made the grand discovery that lightning was the same as electricity, and thus that a flash of lightning consists of the same subtle fluid as the electric spark, such a thrill of happiness passed through his mind that he felt as if he could have died. If such happiness as he felt on discovering a natural truth, in which he was deeply interested, could make Franklin feel as if life had accomplished its task, how much more that happiness which Jacob felt from the recovery of a long-lost son. and still more the happiness which springs from having found the pearl of great price, the one thing needful—the knowledge and love of Iesus, whom to know is life everlasting!

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

AVING followed this charming history in its plain literal sense, and endeavoured to draw from it some of those moral lessons which it abundantly affords, I now propose to shew something of its spiritual meaning, in which a still more precious history than that of Joseph, and a still more heavenly lesson than his life teaches, are delivered.

All the great public characters of the Old Testament history were types or representatives of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and the history of each of them was representative of His history, not always strictly of His outward life, but always of His inward experience. The history of Joseph has many points of resemblance to that of our Lord, though not always in the same connective order. It does not destroy the correspondence that the incidents in Joseph's history,

which resemble some in the history of our Lord, are not in the same order. We find even, on comparing prophecy with its fulfilment, that events do not always occur in the order in which they are predicted. Thus, in the twenty-second Psalm, those remarkable circumstances that occurred at the Lord's crucifixion are distinctly mentioned, but their order is reversed. The first words of that psalm are the last which the Lord uttered immediately before He gave up the ghost-"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Then comes (v. 7, 8) the cruel mockery of the Jews at the Saviour in His agony on the cross—"They shake the head, saying, He trusted in God, that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, seeing that He delighteth in Him." And, lastly, we have the acts of the soldiers, which we may suppose the first of the three—" They parted my garments among them, and cast lots on my vesture." Although, therefore, the incidents in Joseph's history, that resemble some in the history of our Lord, are in a different order, you must not suppose that they are less truly prophetical.

It is my object now to point out some of these for your instruction, and I have some hope that you will find them interesting as well as instructive.

I may first mention the general impression which the history of Joseph leaves on the mind, -that the providence of God had a great work for him to do; that the Lord led him through great tribulation as the means of perfecting his character, and finally exalted him to be a prince and a saviour; in which we cannot fail to see a resemblance to our blessed Lord himself, of whom he was so eminent a type. It is true the elevation to which Joseph was raised was only a temporal one. Like our Lord, he saved men's lives; but there was this essential difference, that he saved the life of men's bodies, while the Lord saved the life of men's souls. This is the grand difference between those, generally, who represented our Lord and Saviour and the Lord Himself whom they represented,—what they did after a natural manner He did after a spiritual manner; what they did for time He did for eternity.

But the resemblance or analogy between our Lord's life and Joseph's may be seen in particular parts, as well as in the general outline. The resemblance or analogy may be traced from Joseph's birth. Joseph, as formerly mentioned, was the son of Rachel. You are well aware that in the Divine Word the church is often represented and described figuratively as a woman, as when the church is called the daughter of Zion and of Jerusalem; the church is also called the Lord's wife, and the members of the church are called her children—her sons and daughters. This arose from the circumstance that all who are regenerated, which means "born again," are born of God as a father and of the church as a mother; and so the divine commandment which requires us to honour our father and mother, while it enjoins love to our parents, spiritually teaches us to love the Lord and His church. The church. as a mother, is spoken of as nursing her children at her sides and dangling them on her knees, and the members of the church are spoken of as her children, sucking and being satisfied with the breasts of her consolation.

The church is spoken of under this beautiful imagery, because the church is a means and an instrument by which our Divine Father nourishes and trains us for heaven.

Now, in the historical as well as in the prophetical parts of the Divine Word, women and wives represent the church, while men and husbands represent the Lord. Thus, Abraham represented the Lord, and so did Isaac and Jacob; and Sarah and Rebecca and Jacob's wives represented the church. Jacob, you remember, had two wives, and they were sisters. These two wives represented two different churches. Leah, the eldest and least beautiful sister, was first married and first had children. Rachel, the youngest and most beautiful, and the best-beloved, was married later, and had no children till after Leah had born all her sons and her daughter. Now, Leah represented the Israelitish or Jewish church, and Rachel represented the Christian church. And you will perceive a reason for the difference between these two wives of Jacob when you reflect, that the Christian church was not only younger, but was more

beautiful and more beloved of the Lord, because more worthy of love than the Jewish church. A very remarkable prophecy and its fulfilment will shew you the truth of this representative character of Rachel. Where Matthew records the cruel slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem by Herod, that he might make sure of murdering among them the infant Saviour, the Evangelist concludes the dreadful narrative by saying-"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, RACHEL weeping for her children, and refused to be comforted, because they are not." This slaughter of the children represented the destruction of innocence in the infant church, with the view of destroying innocence itself in the person of the Lord. who had been born into the world in Bethlehem. The Virgin Mary may be considered as the Rachel of the New Testament-as the mother of Him whom Joseph represented-for Mary, like Rachel, represented the church. The very circumstances of Joseph's birth, therefore, mark him as a type of the Lord our Saviour. But, in the spiritual sense, the lamentation of Rachel means the lamentation of the church over the destruction of innocence within her own borders. The slaughter of all the infants in Bethlehem, except the infant Saviour, represented that all true innocence had been destroyed in the church, and that no innocence was left but that which was incarnated in the Saviour, who was thus preserved, that He might be the Restorer and Author of innocence among men.

The naming of Joseph, too, points to his representative character. His name means adding or increase. In the natural or historical sense it refers, indeed, to his mother's confident hope that God, who, in answer to her prayers, at last had given her a son, would add another to complete her happiness. Yet, in the spiritual sense, the name, when applied to Jesus, signifies the "increase of His government, and peace, of which there shall be no end," and consequently the continual addition of members to His church, as children born of the church as a mother. It is for this reason

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

that our Lord is called the *First Born*, and that those who are born of the church, or regenerated after His image, are called His brethren, as well as His children.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER his birth, as I have already remarked, we learn nothing more of Joseph till he was seventeen years of age. He is then introduced to us as Israel's best beloved son. As Rachel was more loved than Leah, Joseph, the first-born of Rachel, was loved more than the sons of Leah, and more than Benjamin also. The resemblance and analogy of this in the case of Jesus is well known. Jesus is called the beloved son of his Father, or the son of his Father's love. At the Lord's baptism, when the heavens were opened unto Him, there came a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and a similar voice was heard at His transfiguration. There is a difference in the nature of the connection between Jesus and His Father and that of the connection between Joseph and his father, as great a difference as there is between the infinite and the finite. The Lord and His Father are not two distinct persons, as Joseph and Jacob were. At first they were two distinct natures, the Divine and human; and even now, though not two distinct natures, they are two distinct principles, or essentials, like the soul and body in each of us. If Joseph was a type of the Lord as the Son of God, Jacob or Israel may, in a certain sense, be considered as a type of God as the Father of Jesus. But what can be the meaning of the statement that Jacob loved Joseph because he was the son of his old age? It is certain that old age cannot be predicated of the Father of Jesus, for "He is the same vesterday, to-day, and for ever." Old age in those who represented God signified the eternity of God-He whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. But still more resembling the idea of old age is the description of the Eternal in Daniel, where He is called "The Ancient of Days."

As a manifestation of Jacob's love for Joseph, he made him a coat of many colours. This we shall find, if we reflect, has a very.

beautiful meaning in reference to the Lord Before we can see it, we must attend to the Scripture signification of garments. the Revelation we read that they who followed the Lamb, that is the Lord, were arrayed in fine linen, white and clean; for fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Here it is plainly stated that the spiritual garments of saints is their righteousness. It is common for us to speak of things belonging to the mind in this kind of language. We speak of fine writers and speakers clothing their thoughts in beautiful language. And so may we with equal propriety speak of virtuous people clothing their good and benevolent intentions in beautiful deeds, these deeds being garments of righteousness. So the pure and holy deeds of saints are their spotless and shining garments. But our Lord's garments are frequently spoken of, not only while He was on earth, but after He had ascended into and now that He is in heaven. We read of persons being healed by touching the hem of His garment, and of the soldiers at His crucifixion dividing His garments and casting lots on His vesture. We

read also that when He was transfigured on the mount, His face was as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. While the Lord was on earth He was indeed clothed with natural garments, but these garments signified His righteousness, and those with which He is said now to be clothed are His righteousness. It was because His garments had this meaning that the touching of them healed the diseased; and that the rending and dividing of His garments at His crucifixion represented the rejection by the wicked of His truth and righteousness from themselves. What, then, did Joseph's coat of many colours signify in reference to the Lord, whom Joseph represented? We may here repeat that Joseph's coat was made of many pieces, which the word more strictly means. Yet it is no doubt to be understood that these pieces were of different colours; for the coats or garments worn in those times would not require to be made of many different pieces, unless it had been for the sake of having it composed of different colours. As the Lord's garments signified or represented His righteousness, Joseph's

coat was made of many pieces, of as many different colours, to signify that the Lord's righteousness was made up of many different graces and virtues. And as the many-coloured pieces of Joseph's coat were made into one beautiful garment, so the many virtues of our Lord's holy and beautiful life were united and blended, so as to form an entire and beautiful whole. His meekness, His mercy, His love, His forbearance, His forgiveness, His goodness, these and other graces and virtues were like the many different pieces of His garment, and each of them had a colour of its own, which harmonised with all the others, and made a divine and heavenly vesture of surpassing beauty.

For those who are able to take another step in this spiritual view of the coat of many colours, I may mention that we may think of the Lord as the Word. He is called by this name. "In the beginning was the Word—and the Word was made flesh." The written and the incarnate Word are inseparable: from the Lord is Truth itself. In reference to the Word, the coat of many pieces and colours is

the literal sense, for this clothes the spiritual sense; for in the literal sense of the Word the Lord's Divine thoughts are clothed in language and in imagery that bring them down to our feeble capacities. If the literal sense of the Word is understood by the coat which Jacob made for his son, then the many different books of which the Bible is composed, are the many pieces of the mystic coat; Genesis is one piece of this sacred garment, Exodus another, the Psalms another, Isaiah another, and all the other books are different parts. Each of all these may be said to have a different colour: that is, each presents the Lord's Divine truth under a different quality and aspect; no two are alike, yet they all harmonise like the various colours of the rainbow. As all the various colours come from the one pure white light, so do all the different books. and even all the different truths of the Divine Word, come from the one pure truth, which has its fountain in God, as pure white light has its fountain in the sun. The history tells us that Joseph's father made this peculiar coat for Joseph, which fact teaches us, in its reference to the Lord, that the Divine nature which dwelt within Him was the fountain of that ineffable Divine light, which was manifested in the human nature of our Lord in the various beautiful truths He taught and the many beneficent works He performed, which, we have remarked, were shed forth like so many rich hues and varieties of Divine truth to charm and instruct our minds.

CHAPTER III.

RESIDES considering Joseph in relation to his father, we have to consider him in relation to his brethren, whose conduct towards him comes now to be noticed. As Leah represented the Jewish church, Joseph's elder brethren, who were the sons of Leah and of the handmaids, represented the Jewish The Lord resembled Joseph even in this,—that the Jews were His brethren according to the flesh. In the Gospels we read of the Lord's brethren in particular, who were His near relations by His mother Mary; and they shared in the general unbelief in Jesus, for of them it is recorded—"Neither did His brethren believe on Him." (John vii. 5.) But the Jews, generally, hated and persecuted Jesus. as Joseph's brethren hated and persecuted him. Jesus Himself testified of the Jews-"They have both seen and hated both Me and my

Father." (John xv. 24.) And not only had the Jews hated Jesus, but they hated Him without a cause. Speaking of their hatred, the Lord said—"This cometh to pass, that the Word might be fulfilled, they hated Me without a cause." (25.)

While the brethren of Joseph represented the Jewish people in general, they represented the rulers among the Jews in particular; for the twelve sons of Jacob represented the same as the twelve apostles—the leaders and teachers of the people. Hence the sons of Jacob are spoken of as feeding their father's flock; and you know that in the divine Word the Lord's people are often called His sheep and His flock, and their ministers and teachers are called shepherds; and among us it is common to call ministers pastors, that is, shepherds.

When Joseph was sent by his father to see his brethren, they had gone to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And when Jacob sent his son away he said to him—"Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and with the flocks." And so Joseph went with a message of peace, on an errand of love

prophecies of the Lord being cast into the pit. As in Lamentations iv. 20-"The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits." Before Joseph's brethren cast him into a pit, they stript him of his coat. The Jews literally stript Jesus of His coat before His crucifixion. In the fifteenth chapter of Mark we find that, when Pilate had delivered Jesus into the hands of the people to be scourged and crucified, they put a purple robe on Him, and a crown of thorns on His head, and in profane mockery saluted Him, saying-" Hail, King of the Jews." It is not said that they stript Jesus of His own raiment, for this is implied by their scourging Him; but when we read at the twentieth verse that they took off the purple robe and put His own clothes on Him, we learn that they had previously taken His own clothes off. This was done again at His crucifixion, when they parted His outer garments and cast lots on His vesture, which was His inner garment. The outer garment of Jesus was a similar one to the coat of Joseph. This garment, too, like the coat of Joseph, was of several pieces, while

His vesture was of one piece, without seam, woven from the top throughout. (John xix. 23.) Applied to the Word, we know that the inner garment represented the internal sense of the Word, which is wrought by infinite wisdom into one seamless vesture of perfect truth and loveliness. But the outer garment of the letter, though perfectly adapted to its purpose. is less perfect in itself, less perfect in unity; it is not seamless, but is made of pieces, yet exquisitely joined together so as to form one garment. According to the figure already employed, the internal sense is like white light which includes all colours blended in one. God is said to be clothed with light as with a garment; and this is the seamless vesture with which the Lord is clothed. But the external sense of the Word is like the white light when it falls upon a cloud descending in drops of rain, where it is divided or broken into the many colours of the glorious arch that spans the heavens—the beautiful rainbow. natural sense of the divine Word is indeed the pure light of the internal sense broken into its many colours, when it falls upon the cloud of the letter; and so the Word in the letter compared in Scripture both to the rainbo and the cloud. When the soldiers at the Lord crucifixion rent the Lord's garments in piece they represented what the Jewish church ha done with the Word of the Lord, for the divided and dissipated its divine truths, an so destroyed it in and among themselves.

It is not, however, said of Joseph's brethrer when they stript him of his coat, that the rent or divided it; but they did what expresse a still greater malignity, and which had a still worse meaning. "They killed a kid of th goats, and dipped the coat in the blood." Th killing the kid was a figurative killing o Joseph himself. Their first design was to im brue their hands in their brother's blood, and to take his blood-stained garments to their father; and the blood of the kid was but a substitute for that of his son. Blood-stained garments are mentioned in the Word; in one striking instance in reference to the Lord Jesu Himself. In the nineteenth chapter of Reve lation, where the second coming of the Lore is predicted and figuratively described, He i

represented as coming riding on a white horse, "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood." What this vesture means we can be at no loss to understand; for it is there said that His name is called "the Word of God." The Lord came as the Word, that is, He came spiritually by opening His Word, enabling men to see, and know, and receive Him. Now if, as we have seen, the literal sense of the Word is meant by the Lord's garment, then some particular condition of the Word must be meant to be described, when the Lord, as the Word, is said to be clothed in a garment dipped in blood. This representation means, that at the end of the church, when the Lord should come to raise up a new church, His Word would have suffered violence. men are spoken of in the Word in the strongest terms of condemnation and abhorrence, and it is even said that "the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." (Psa. v. 6.) When, therefore, it is recorded that Joseph's brethren dipped his coat in blood, we have a representation of what the Jews did to the Lord and His Word; they did violence to them.

even to the shedding of blood, to the destruction in themselves of all the blessed truths which the Lord had taught them, and which His word revealed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next act of cruelty which Joseph's brethren did to him is one that finds an obvious similitude in the history of our Lord. Their selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites has its counterpart in Judas selling Jesus. And here there is this special resemblance, in that Judah was the one who counselled his brethren to sell Joseph. Judah and Judas are the same names, and in their perverted character these two men have the same spiritual signification -the highest good turned into the deepest evil. Judah also had gain in view as an end, for he said—"What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? come, let us sell him." There is not in these two transactions a perfect likeness. Judah sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites, Judas sold Jesus to the Jews; Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver, Jesus was sold for thirty. I do not

wish to be understood to say, or try to shew, that there is a strict similarity between the two histories; I only wish to point out such similarities as do exist. Joseph was, indeed, like many others, a type of Jesus; but the similarity between their two histories is an internal one. Outward resemblances are only occasional; but they do occur, and, when they appear, some of the inward analogies are seen cropping out on the surface, and shewing something of what lies below. The purely internal sense lies too deep for young minds clearly to understand it, and therefore only so much is attempted to be given here as seems adequate to the apprehension and the wants of young members of the Church. There is, however, even here, a nearer resemblance between the histories of Joseph and of Jesus than at first sight appears. The Ishmaelites, and also the Midianites who are mentioned in connexion with them, were Gentiles, and represented the Gentiles who existed at the time our Lord came into the world. But the Gentiles are spoken of as enemies to the Lord as well as the Jews, and were equally concerned with the Jews in the Lord's death, though they were not equally guilty. The Gentiles are mentioned by the Lord in connection with the subject of Judas selling Him. In the 20th chapter of Matthew, ver. 18, our Lord says-"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify." This literally took place. The Jews condemned Jesus, and delivered Him into the hands of the Romans, who were Gentiles, who mocked Him, by putting on Him a purple robe and a thorny crown, and who scourged and crucified Him. The reason of this was, that the Jews at that time were subject to the Romans, and these "Gentiles" retained the power of execution in their own hands. When, therefore, the brethren sold Joseph, they delivered him unto the Gentiles. We do not. indeed, read of these Gentiles mocking and scourging Joseph; but they in their turn delivered him unto the Egyptians, who inflicted great suffering upon him.

But there were two classes of Gentiles, as there are two classes of Jews-a class that were good and a class that were absolutely or relatively bad. The good among the Jews were represented by Reuben among the brethren of Joseph, for he not only objected to the proposal of his brethren to put Joseph to death, but endeavoured to rid him out of their hands. and deliver him to his father; the others, who sold Joseph, represented the wicked among the Iews. So there were two different tribes of Gentiles concerned in the disposal of Joseph. He was bought by the Ishmaelites and sold by the Midianites—the Ishmaelites representing the good among the Gentiles who received and acknowledged the Lord at His coming, the Midianites, those who rejected and denied Him.

In Joseph's being taken down into Egypt we behold another striking resemblance or analogy in the Lord's history. Jesus was carried down into Egypt by an express divine command. Here again, indeed, there is a want of strict historical conformity of Joseph's with our Lord's history. The Lord was carried down to Egypt when a "young child;" Joseph

when he was a young man. Yet here again there is a greater similarity than at first sight appears. Joseph, in this part of the history. is called a child. When Reuben, who was absent when his brethren sold Joseph, came to the pit into which he had been cast, and found he was not there, he exclaimed in his agony of spirit-"The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" And the Lord, by the prophet Hosea, speaks of Joseph and of the whole family of Israel who went down to him in Egypt in the same way—"When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my Son out of Egypt." Israel is said to have been then a child, to express the comparative innocence of the Israelites at that time, and also in allusion to their infancy as a people. This passage in Hosea is quoted by Matthew in relation to the Lord. When relating the flight of Joseph with Jesus and His mother into Egypt, the evangelist says that this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying—"Out of Egypt have I called my Son." (ii. 15.) It is here plainly stated that the descent of Joseph and his father's household into Egypt, was typical of the event of Jesus being carried down there to escape the vengeance of Herod. As Israel went down to be preserved alive in the famine, so Jesus was carried down to be saved alive from the cruelty of the bloody Herod.

But what was the reason for both being led down into that country? It was because in Scripture every place has a spiritual meaning. And the meaning of Egypt may be known from its character at the time the Scriptures were written. In Egypt science and knowledge flourished more than in any other country. The wise men of other countries travelled into Egypt, to study the wisdom which there had her chief seat; for there the remains of ancient religion and intelligence, and the science of all sciences, the science of the correspondence between natural and spiritual things, which constituted the wisdom of the ancient church, found its last retreat when the church came to its end. The Israelitish church was then in its commencement, for it, of course, commenced with Israel; and it was to initiate that church into as much of the ancient wisdom as remained there, that Providence led, first Joseph, and then Israel and his family, down into Egypt. But as the Israelitish was not to be a spiritual church, but only the representative of a spiritual church, it was principally for the sake of making their history representative that the children of Israel went down there. And it was to represent that Jesus our Saviour was to be initiated into science and wisdom, such as Egypt represented, that He was carried down there when a child; for the Lord's outward history was representative of His inward life.

CHAPTER V.

[] HEN Joseph was carried into Egypt, it was in order that his history might represent the Lord's acquisitions, and, after His, the acquisitions of the Christian disciple, as the means of growing in the divine and spiritual life; for we know that Jesus increased in wisdom, and, through that wisdom, in favour with God and man. But wisdom is not acquired without labour, nor even without tribulation. In the progress of the mind in wisdom, one must serve before he can rule. and he must be tried before he can be confirmed in goodness. Of this, Joseph, when in Egypt, had his full share. Our Lord Himself, we have seen, passed through severe trial and temptation, and these were so great that those which Joseph endured but faintly represented them. In some of the prophecies our Lord's sufferings are described symbolically by the

very things that Joseph suffered. In the 53rd of Isaiah, where the Lord's great trials are described, it is said, "He was taken from prison and from judgment." Yet the Lord was never literally in prison; but He was in states of temptation, which are meant by being in prison, and being bound; for in temptation the soul is in terrible straitness or anguish; the thoughts and feelings seem as if they were imprisoned, and the powers of the mind seem as if they were bound, and deprived of all free and happy exercise. In His great temptation at Gethsemane our Lord declared that His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. After His death, He was imprisoned in the grave, till He burst the bands of death, and rose triumphant over death and the grave. between His death and resurrection we learn that He descended into the prison-house of the world of spirits, and there went and preached unto the spirits in prison (I Peter iii. 19). This was not what is properly called hell, for preaching to those in that eternal prison could be of no avail; but it was in that intermediate or middle region where all, both

the vile and the good, first enter after death. and where the good are separated from the evil by the judgment; and such a judgment was effected by the Lord at the end of the Jewish church. The good, who had been detained there as prisoners of hope, waiting for the Lord's redemption, are meant by the saints which slept, and arose at the time of our Lord's resurrection, and went into the holy city, that is, into heaven. We find, therefore, one of the works which the Messiah was to perform at His coming, as announced by the prophets, was bringing the prisoners out of the prison house. (Isaiah xlii. 7.) Joseph's good works in the prison may be considered as bearing some analogy to those of our Lord just mentioned. The good and evil spirits who were bound in prison in the spiritual world, were represented by the butler and the baker; and Joseph, in his interpretation of their dreams, preached hope and deliverance to the good servant of Pharaoh, but pronounced the awful doom of death to the evil one; and the result was that one was saved and the other was lost.

But the grand purpose of Divine Providence in conveying Joseph down into Egypt was, that he might be the honoured instrument of making such a provision during the years when the earth yielded abundance as might feed the famishing nations during the years of famine. In this he was peculiarly the type of the Lord as the Saviour.

As Joseph's detention in prison represented the Lord's trials and temptations, which ended with his death and burial, and his being three days in the heart of the earth; his being brought up out of the prison dungeon into the the palace and presence of the mighty and magnificent Pharaoh, represented the Lord's resurrection. When Joseph was out of his prison house, he shaved himself and changed his raiment. So when our blessed Lord rose from the dead, He left His garments in the tomb, and appeared to His disciples in new and heavenly robes. By this was represented that He put off in the tomb the remnant or residue of the frail humanity derived from his mother Mary, and rose with a humanity wholly derived from His Father, and therefore Divine.

In the Divine Word, where we find the Lord's divine work in the flesh represented in various forms, this change,-the putting off of the old, and putting on of the new, is also representatively described. In the prophecy of Zechariah, (chap. iii.) Joshua the high priest is presented before us as a type of the Lord Iesus, as the great high priest of his church. In that singular chapter of a singular prophecy, the prophet says, "And he (the angel) shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at His right hand. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said. Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." We must remark that this filthy garment does not apply to the whole human nature, but only to that part of it which was from the frail and finite human mother Mary, and that the iniquity which was to pass from him, was not active iniquity, for the

Lord never had any actual sin, but only the hereditary tendencies to evil derived from His fallen human parent. All this garment of frailty and mortality the Lord put off, and put on as "change of raiment" a garment of infinite purity and immortality, such as that in which He appeared on the mount of transfiguration, when His raiment was white as the But Joseph not only changed his garment, but he shaved himself. And this part of his change was like that of the Nazarite when the days of his Nazariteship were ended: on which occasion he shaved his head. It was a law amongst the Israelites, also, that if any man desired to marry a beautiful captive who had been taken in war, she should shave her head and pair her nails, and put off the raiment of her captivity, after which they should be married. (Deut. xxi. 13.) In all these cases, shaving and changing the raiment was meant to be a sign of putting off what is old, and putting on what was new, and thus symbolizing a change of state.

It has been formerly remarked that Joseph, being made governor over all the land of Egypt, represented the exaltation of Jesus: and this was spoken of by the apostle Peter, when he bore his noble testimony before the Jewish council—"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins." (Acts v. 30.) We shall not dwell on all the particulars that now follow in the history of Joseph; it will be enough to present some general outline.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE were two leading objects which. according to Joseph's own statement, God had in view in so overruling events as to make them result in Joseph's elevation to the exalted station he occupied in Egypt; the preservation of the world in general, and of his father's house in particular. This he provided for by laying up corn, to satisfy their souls with bread in famine. Can we fail to see in this abundant provision for sustaining the natural life of men, the infinite provision which our blessed Lord, the heavenly Joseph, made by His incarnation and glorification for sustaining the spiritual life of men? He declared Himself to be the living bread that came down from heaven to give life unto the world, and that any man eating of this bread should live for ever. (John vi. 51.) The famine from which the Lord came to save man was that of which

Amos speaks—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor of thirst for water, but of hearing of the words of the Lord." (viii. 11.) Such a famine as this prevailed in the world in general, and in the Jewish church in particular, when our Lord came into the world; and it was to supply the heavenly bread for which the souls of men were famishing that the Lord came, or as the Psalmist expresses it, it was to deliver their souls from death, and to keep them alive in famine (xxxiii. 19.) This was the great and universal famine, which the long and terrible natural famine that occurred in Egypt represented; and the Lord who came to supply the heavenly bread, to satisfy the hunger of the perishing souls of men, was the everlasting Saviour, of whom Joseph, the temporary saviour, was the honoured and appropriate type. In order that the unlimited extent of the Lord's redemption might be symbolized by that of His representative, Joseph, the inspired historian writes that "the famine was over all the face of the earth, and all countries came into Egypt to

Joseph to buy corn, because that the famine was sore in all lands." (Gen. xli. 56.) True indeed is this spirituality, respecting the famine of hearing the Word of God in our Saviour's days, and is still. And are not all lands coming, or being brought, to our Divine Saviour. for to buy "the corn of heaven," (Psalm lxxviii. 24,) which Jesus alone can supply, and which He is willing to sell, "without money and without price," (Isaiah lv. 1,) "to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness?" (Matt. v. 6.) And the day will come when Jesus will literally be the Desire of all nations, and all nations whom He hath made will come and worship before Him. (Psalm lxxxvi. 9.) And as the Egyptians bowed the knee before Joseph, so at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. ii. 10.)

I have remarked that one purpose God had in Joseph's exaltation was the salvation of his father's house in particular. Israel's house represented the Israelitish church or people,

and indeed those within the church in every age, as distinguished from the heathen who are without. And besides the participation by the members of the visible church in the common blessing of spiritual abundance, provided under the dispensation of the Gospel, to them emphatically, though not exclusively, apply another blessing of redemption. In the passage from the Acts already cited, Peter says-"Jesus hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." How strikingly was this typically exhibited in the conduct of Joseph towards his brethren, whose enmity he overcame with his love, the record of whose injuries he blotted out with the tears of his forgiveness! How beautiful an image do the spirit and conduct of Joseph towards his brethren present of the spirit and power of Jesus Christ towards those whom He has condescended to call His brethren! For what is the testimony of the Gospel on this subject?—"God commended His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by

the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life." (Rom. v. 8.) Bitter enemies as Joseph's brethren had been to him, he had no enmity to them; and when he revealed himself to them. it was only as a reconciler and a saviour. Beautifully, indeed, does he hold up the mirror to that infinitely greater Reconciler and Saviour, and of that infinitely greater reconciliation and salvation which the Gospel makes known, and which it has expressed in these ever-memorable words—"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. v. 19.) God has never been our enemy, and has never needed to be reconciled. But we all are naturally enemies to God, and do, indeed, all of us need to be reconciled to Him. Therefore, the apostle continues—" Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

The apostle, in the passage from the Epistle to the Romans already cited, says, that if we are reconciled to God by Christ's death, much

more shall we be saved by His life. salvation that follows reconciliation was presented by the house of Israel being sa from famine and kept alive by the provi which Joseph made for them, after he reconciled his brethren to himself. when our Divine Saviour has overcome enmity, and by His inconceivable love turned us into friends, then does He save by His life, feeding our souls with the liv bread which is Himself. This salvation the Lord's life is admirably expressed by apostle, where he says—" For this cause I my knees unto the Father of our Lord J Christ, of whom the whole family in hea and earth is named, that He would grant. according to the riches of His glory, to strengthened with might by His Spirit in inner man; that Christ may dwell in hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted grounded in love, may be able to compreh with all saints what is the breadth, and len and depth, and height; and to know the of Christ that passeth knowledge, that might be filled with all the fulness of G (Eph. iii. 14.)

We cannot better conclude this part of the subject than by adding the closing description of the apostle—" Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh within us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end."

CHAPTER VII.

AM unwilling to crowd too many different ideas into your minds, which might have the effect of rendering that confused which would otherwise be clear. I think, however, that I may venture very slightly to advert to another spiritual lesson which this beautiful history offers. It is different from the one we have just considered, but in harmony with it. It relates immediately to ourselves, and teaches something relating to our own spiritual life, as we are in our natural or evil state, and to the saving work which the Lord effects in those who are willing to become His children. Whatever in the Divine Word relates to the Lord and His experience, relates also to us and our experience, provided we become His true disciples.

Endeavour now to transfer the scene of this history to your own minds, and then try to

think of the persons mentioned in it as representing principles, or things that belong to your minds. Think of Leah and Rachel as representing two different but kindred affections; Leah representing a natural affection, and Rachel a spiritual affection. Then, if you can see that Leah represents a natural affection, you may be able further to see that her sons represent thoughts that proceed from that natural affection; and if you can see that Rachel represents a spiritual affection, you may be able to see that Rachel's sons represent spiritual thoughts that come forth from that spiritual affection. To see the general spiritual meaning of the history of Joseph, you only need to have some clear idea of the two kinds of thoughts that Joseph and Benjamin represent on the one hand, and that the ten brethren represent on the other. If you are in any degree religious, you must have these two kinds of thoughts present in your mindsthoughts about God and heaven, and thoughts about yourselves and the world, or thoughts about spiritual things and thoughts about natural things. If you have observed your

own thoughts, you will also know that your natural or worldly thoughts sometimes hate and oppose your spiritual or heavenly thoughts. For instance, when your spiritual thoughts tell you that you ought to be kind and forgiving to others, your natural thoughts will suggest to you that others do not deserve your kindness and forgiveness, and that you ought to be severe and revengeful. Also, when your spiritual thoughts tell you that you ought always to obey the demands of duty, your natural thoughts will tell you that it is better to follow the calls of inclination. There is. indeed, in every mind that has any religion a conflict between the natural and the spiritual thoughts; for as the Scriptures say-"The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." Now this conflict was represented by the brethren of Joseph hating and persecuting him. But as Joseph did not hate his brethren, but endured his trials and sufferings meekly, so the spiritual thoughts never hate, but endure temptations meekly, hoping the best, thinking the best, and doing the best.

But, besides this, spiritual thoughts love the natural thoughts, as the Christian loves his enemies, and desires nothing more than to do them good and be reconciled to them, or rather to reconcile them to itself. For the natural thoughts only require to put away their enmity to the spiritual, and submit themselves to their authority, to become good and useful, and make their possessor happy. Now, how is the reconciliation of these and their union with the spiritual to be effected? They have in the first place to be starved into submission. This is meant by the famine. you may ask what is meant by the natural thoughts being starved into submission? this I mean you must deprive your natural desires of their selfish indulgences, and this is expressed by the word Self-denial. When they prompt you to do anything, or when they crave anything, that your better thoughts tell you it is not right to do or good to grant, you must withhold from them what you know is sure to be hurtful to them. This famine will cause them to come and submit themselves to your spiritual thoughts, and their sub112

mission will become the means of bringing them into a better state. But there is one full and final means of union between the natural thoughts and the spiritual, which this history teaches us. You know Joseph did not make himself known to his brethren, nor did the reconciliation between them take place, till the brothers brought Benjamin down with them to Egypt. Now, Benjamin represents a uniting medium, a principle that unites the natural to the spiritual thoughts, or the natural mind to the spiritual mind. And what, think you, may that medium be? That medium is truth in act, and this Benjamin represents. In other words, Benjamin represents obedience to the divine commandments. And what is obedience to the divine commandments? It is to shun evil because God has told us that we are not to do it, and to do good because God has told us that we are to do it. The brethren had great difficulty in getting Benjamin down to Egypt, so we find it a hard and difficult thing to bring ourselves to a state of actual and active obedience to the commandments of God; but as soon as

we accomplish this all-important object, the happy result surely and quickly follows.

What, then, do we learn from this beautiful and instructive history under this last view? We learn that, after we have entered on the life of religion, there are two different kinds of affections within us, some that come from heaven and others that come from the world. We learn, further, that these two kinds of affections and thoughts draw the mind in opposite directions, one prompting and telling us to place our hearts on heavenly things, the other prompting and telling us to place our hearts on earthly things. The Lord in His providence permits us to undergo trials and sufferings, anxieties and privations, in order to exalt the spiritual and humble the natural, as Joseph was exalted and his brethren were humbled. And the Lord's purpose in this is to bring the spiritual and natural into a state of agreement, in which they act harmoniously together. This is finally and fully effected by obedience to the truth, by resolutely and constantly doing what we know to be our duty to God and to man. This is sure to bring

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peace to our minds, peace with God and peace with each other. When God created man, He made all his spiritual and natural affections and thoughts in sweet agreement with each other. What was it that set them at variance? It was disobedience to the divine command. You remember what discord, and labour, and trouble, and anguish the Creator told Adam and Eve they had brought upon themselves by having disobeyed His command? The discord and trouble have continued to this day; and all outward discord and trouble arise from discord and trouble in our own minds. If this unhappy state of discord, and strife, and trouble came by disobedience, how can it be removed but by obedience? God originally wrote His holy law upon the heart, and when that law was effaced from the heart, He wrote it with His own fingers upon tables of stone. This is the law of the ten commandments which we have in the Bible, and which every child is taught to remember and to understand. Since the time the law was given from Mount Sinai, the Lord has come into the world, and we know

Him as the Lord Jesus Christ. He came too for the very purpose of living a life of obedience to His own divine law. And now we have His holy and blessed example; and, besides this, we have His grace to influence our hearts, and we have His divine teaching to direct our lives, line upon line, and precept upon precept, saying to us-"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you; he that hath my commandments, and doeth them, he it is that loveth me; if a man love me, he will keep my words; he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; if ye love me, keep my commandments." When the Lord had delivered these sayings to His disciples, then He said-" Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you."

How are we to obtain the peace of Jesus? By obedience to His commandments. Obedience is the peace-maker. Obedience, or perseverance in well-doing, overcomes all difficulties, settles all controversies, adjusts all differences, and unites in one things that sin has separated from each other. It is quite true that we require to have love and faith as

well as obedience. But love and faith work out their purposes by obedience, and can complete no work without it. To speak of the subject as symbolized in the present history; there must be a Benjamin as well as a Joseph; and although Joseph is the moving and directing cause, Benjamin is the acting medium. Obedience is the younger brother of love and faith. And we should remember the words of Joseph to his brethren—"Ye shall not see my face except your younger brother be with you." (Gen. xliii. 3.)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE spiritual lessons which I have endeavoured to draw from the history of Joseph, may be made more clear and complete by considering the blessing which his father Jacob pronounced upon him before his death. In the forty-ninth chapter, we read that when the aged patriarch was near to die, he called his twelve sons around him, to tell them what should befall them in the last days. This was a very singular thing for Jacob to do. It is not uncommon for a father to give his dying advice to his children, exhorting them to love and unity, to virtue and piety; knowing their past character, he may even warn them of dangers to which they will be exposed, and exhort them to conduct which they will need to observe, if they would hope to prosper in this world or be happy in the next. But what human father could tell

each one of a numerous family what would befall him in the future period of his life? Yet Jacob did this; but he did it because he spake from the Spirit of God, who alone knows, and therefore who alone can reveal, future events. Jacob's address to his sons was thus prophetic. And that it was divinely prophetic, appears from this, that his prediction, in some of its particulars at least, stretched far into the future, and thus related, not to his sons themselves, but to the tribes which sprang from them. For instance, he says of Zebulon, "He shall dwell at the haven of the sea, and he shall be for an haven of ships, and his border shall be unto Zidon." This prediction was not fulfilled till nearly two hundred years after Jacob's death, when the children of Israel went up out of Egypt into Canaan, and when the tribe of Zebulon obtained their inheritance on the sea-shore, stretching to Zidon. But still more remarkable is the prophecy respecting Judah, which did not receive its fulfilment till the time of the Lord's coming, nearly two thousand years after it was uttered. It relates, not to the person, nor even strictly to the tribe, but to the kingdom of Judah, And Judah did not cease to be a kingdom—the sceptre did not depart from Judah, until Shiloh came in the person of Jesus, who was born King of the Jews, and who came to wield the sceptre of righteousness over those who are Jews indeed. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

A prophecy which thus extends beyond the Jewish to the Christian Church, which looks forward to the coming of the Messiah, and the establishment of His kingdom, must treat of higher and more enduring things than those which relate to the sons of Israel. Their history was but the natural form of the history of the Christian Church, their kingdom was but the shadow of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. This being the case, Jacob's prophetic description of the future state and condition of his sons, describes the state and condition of those whom his sons represented. Those who belong to the Lord's Church are the spiritual Israel; and in the prophetic words of Jacob to his

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sons they may find a description of their own religious character, as revealed by light from heaven. The children of God are of various characters; some are like Issachar to serve, some like Judah to rule. But all are designed by Providence to be useful and happy. The better they become the more happy they are. The nearer they approach the character of Joseph, so loving and wise, so generous and forgiving, the more will they acquire for themselves the high character and the rich blessings which Jacob gave to this son of his old age, to whom he and all his house owed their life and prosperity. Let us look attentively at what the inspired patriarch says of him.

CHAPTER IX.

ACOB says of his younger son, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him. But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, (from thence, the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." The first thing

that must strike every one on reading this mysterious language is, that Joseph was a type of the Lord Jesus; who is truly the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel. Jesus is He of whom every child learns to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me by the still waters: He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Jesus Himself said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." He also is the Stone of Israel, the foundation and corner stone of the church. He is our Shepherd as the God of Love: He is the Stone as the God of Truth; for His love feeds us and His truth supports us. In His love and in His pity He redeemed us. And when He has brought us up out of the horrible pit and from the miry clay, He sets our feet upon a rock, and establishes our goings. Other parts of our Lord's character and doings are described in Jacob's blessing upon Joseph, as His persecutions and temptations by the archers shooting at Him, and His triumphs by His bow abiding in His strength; but as it

relates also to those who strive to live as He lived, that they may share the blessing with which He is crowned, it may be more useful to look at it in this practical way.

"Joseph is a fruitful bough by a well." the Gospel (John xv.) Jesus says to His disciples, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." We are fruitful boughs when we love and live in Jesus. Our Lord said further, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples." Bearing fruit, which is leading a good life, is the work and the mark of a child of God. But Joseph is called a fruitful bough by a well. This well is the Word of God, whose truths are the living waters that cause us to flourish and bear fruit. For although the Lord is our life, He nourishes us through His Holy Word. We must draw water from this well of salvation, by learning its lessons of wisdom, and doing what they teach us to do, or we can never become fruitful boughs. We must not however expect that this duty will be always easy. When the

daughters of the priest of Midian came to draw water from the well, the evil shepherds drove them away. (Ex. ii. 3). So there are evil spirits, and evil companions that would drive us away from the Holy Well, whence we draw the water of life. These are the archers that Jacob says "sorely grieved Joseph, and shot at him, and hated him." All who strive to lead a holy life meet with opposition; and sometimes they are too much inclined to yield, and fall away. But not so did Joseph; nor must you who hope to obtain Joseph's blessing. "His bow abode in strength." So must yours. And what is your bow? The Christian's bow is the doctrine of faith and life, the armour which he receives from "the Captain of his salvation." And how is the young Christian's bow to abide in strength? As Joseph's did. "The arms of his hands were. made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." He must use his hands, or exert his power; but he must not trust in his own power alone, so as to say, "Mine own arm hath gotten me the victory;" he must pray for and trust in the power which comes from God

only, even from the Lord Jesus, who alone can give strength to His children, to conquer all that would draw or drive them away from the service of their loving Saviour. And here is the promise to him who trusts: "The God of thy father shall help thee, and the Almighty shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above. blessings of the deep that lieth under." All heavenly and earthly blessings reward the good and obedient. All heavenly blessings are included in the delight of the love of Jesus, and all earthly blessings are included in the peace which He bestows upon His faithful fol-With His peace the poor are rich, and the mean great; without it the rich are poor and the great mean. Then there are "the blessings of the breasts and of the womb," that is, the blessings of being born again, and being, as a new creature, nourished with "the sincere milk of the Word." And then comes the final blessings—"The blessings of thy father have prevailed (or shall prevail) above the blessings of thy progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." When one is born again, God is his Father, and he is

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God's son; and the blessings of his Heavenly Father prevail over all other blessings, even those of creation, extending to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. These are the hills of which the Psalmist speaks, when he says, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help: my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Ps. cxxi. 1). The utmost bound of the everlasting hills is where charity rises into mutual love,—that brotherly love of which Joseph was so eminent an example, that love of one another by which the disciples of Jesus are to be known of all men, which has its dwelling place in the Lord's church on earth and its eternal home in heaven. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore!" This is the blessing of all blessings, it is that which "shall be upon the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren;" and which shall be the crowning reward of every one who loves as Joseph loved, and lives as Joseph lived; and who has in his heart that affection of mutual love which Joseph represented.

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